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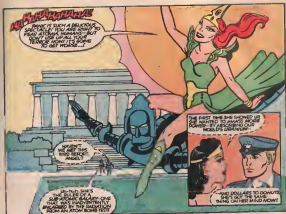
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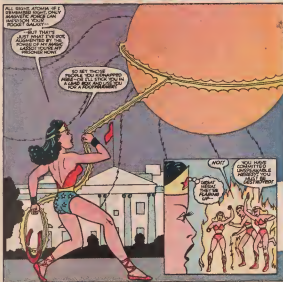
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MEANWHILE...

All of a sudden, I'm walking around with the shoe on the other foot... as a boy, does it feel weird?

Before I explain that, let me introduce myself. My name's Paul Engleberg, and for the past eleven years or so, I've been a free-lance writer here at DC Comics. You've probably seen my name here and there in lots of books... at least I hope you have. I've written, eh, about *Wonder* and how that started in that line.

Everything from **SUPERMAN** to **BATMAN** to **JERRY COIN** to **SUPERMAN** to **SHRINK TO SUPERMAN** to **SUPER POWER TO VIGILANTE** to well, the list just goes on and on (and on and on...). Let's just say that at one time or another, I've had a hand in most of the comics you've published. So my ego couldn't take it if you saw my name and said, "Who?"

So that's all easy, after all these years and that many stories, I know at least answer automatically, "Freelance writer" to that question you always give at parties. (So, what do you do for a living?)

Except now I've got to stop and think before I answer. In fact, I've got to change my whole way of thinking. Because now, though I'm still writing, that's not all I do.

How I'm also an... editor!

You see, a few weeks back (as of this writing, which is more or less exactly due to the middle of November '85), editorial guru Dick Giordano introduced me into the inner sanctum of DC's main offices. Since Dick is such a busy guy (you might be on the top of his desk... except you can't see the top of his desk, it's covered so deep with papers and proposals and not-and books that a cleaning woman couldn't do the job, although there has been talk of hiring in an anthropologist), he got right to the point: was I interested in a temporary staff position as editor?

Well, I'd only been dropping hints to that effect for the previous six months, so I answered with a resounding "Yes, brother, Paul Engleberg!" He gave me less pointed me in the direction of a desk

and told me to get to work. We've been out a tad short-handed on the editorial front for a while, and just then were made even worse by the departure of Gordon Ross (an all-time pro, himself) a few days prior to my being asked. And there you're getting out as many books as we do on a monthly schedule, even a few weeks can put you into serious lateness, bringing down upon your head the wrath of both Managing Editor Tom Connor and Production Manager Bob Kaneda. And that's great that anybody who's been around DC for any length of time knows they won't avoid it any cost.

But you don't know the full extent of things until you walk around in the other side of the desk.

But I'm learning. Oh, am I learning! Let's I said, I've been around this industry for some time as a writer—better than a third of my life. And when you turn in the years I spent as a fan, back to the days when I used to publish letters with another Paul/Lewis, that let's tell the stories more than half my time on this Earth. So I've got a pretty good working knowledge of the ways and whys of the biz. I mean, let's face it, you can't have progressed with as many editors as I have without picking up something of what they do. Especially if you've ever worked with someone like Julius Schwartz, the writing legendary editor. The only problem with him is that he makes it all look so darn easy.

But it's not!

Don't get me wrong. I'm having a ball in my new position, brother! In fact, I feel it's quite a bit of adjusting a body has to make when it goes from devil any-one else (except to close to him) working with a lot of it has to do with adjustments to the head. Suddenly, I'm one of "them!" But I'm also still a free-lancer. But not all the time except I'm trying desperately to maintain a balance not between the two extremes. See, I've always felt that writers and editors are playing on the same team and should mutually interact, working together to create the best possible product for you. But lots of writers and/or editors take a slightly different view, which is sometimes understandable, since the editor is very often the least of his blessings. ("This doesn't work... return that to the other three... sorry, there's

nothing for you this week..."), and, like the teenager who grows up wanting he'd never say or do the things his parents did in his when he becomes a parent himself, I find myself having to pass along the bad news to readers, but the editors just have done to me. And it's not easy because, in my mind at least, I'm still one of them and I know what it's like to be on the receiving end. I don't want to make this sound like I'm all happy about being a writer turned editor. It's not... far from it.

There's also the previously mentioned joy of working with a writer or artist on creating something, having the type of creative input that I've always appreciated from above. It's really kind of neat to sit back and let somebody as unobediently as possible help guide some new story concept through to birth pains. I'm quite frankly astonished at how much satisfaction can be derived from that process, rather than the feeling of fatherhood I may get as a writer. It's more like a proud grandfather watching his grandchild take his first steps.

And, of course, there's also a bit of disarray involved. Hey, let's face it: somebody's got to shuffle their papers around, keep track of schedules and the like. That's why they pay an for big bucks, you know?

So all in all, I'm liking this new gig a whole lot. Oh, sure, I no longer have the freedom to get up as I leave my work area for a nice long walk or a relaxing nap when the energy's running low, but on the other hand, I'm also not sitting around in my office at home day in and day out, with nobody to talk with or have lunch with, waiting for all the normal life to get back from work at 5:00 to have someone to play with. So it more or less balances itself out in the long run.

Now, if only something could be done about commuting on the New York City subway during rush hours, I might just turn out to be perfect.

—Paul Engleberg

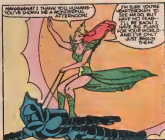
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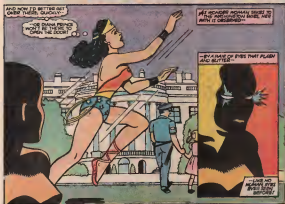
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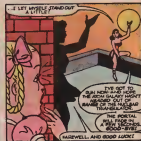
- ✓ Legionnaires 3-4: The mini-series concludes as Lightning Lad leaves with his brother!
- ✓ Legend of Wonder Woman 1: A four issue mini-series with art by Tiana Rodden!
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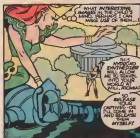












A full-page illustration of the character Deadman. He is depicted in a dynamic, mid-air pose, wearing his signature red suit with a black cape. He holds a long, golden sword diagonally across his body. His face is a pale, featureless mask, and his eyes are visible as white sockets. The background is a swirling, ethereal blue and white, with a large, faint skull of a man's face visible behind him. The overall style is classic comic book art.

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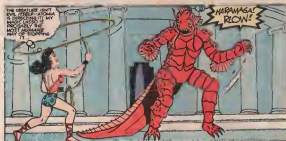


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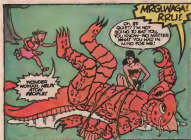
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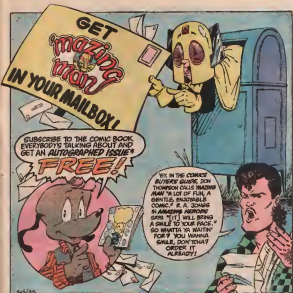
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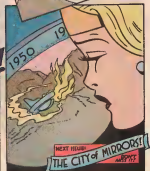
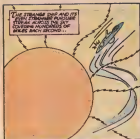
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Well, here we are in the first issue of a **WONDER WOMAN** series that is, if nothing else, a sharp change in direction for the character. It's become kind of traditional to a time like this for the top-page writer to go on and on about how great a character Wonder Woman is and to lament the fact that she's never been handled well—and that's supposed to explain why she does as well as a licensed property, while the comic fares indifferently at best with the fans. The implication seems to be that this new direction is going to turn things around and make **WONDER WOMAN** a screaming sales success and the talk of the fan press.

Trouble is, whenever I hear one of those "Wonder Woman's never been handled well" columns, my reaction was to tell the writer was leaving himself wide open for a "and this is no exception" response. So I'm not going to tell about that. At least not about the direction of the **WONDER WOMAN** series over the past 28 years.

But I do think Wonder Woman has great character. I'll even go up to this much: In fact, one of the things that struck anyone who's written **WONDER WOMAN** will agree on is that the lead character has huge potential, and that the original conception of the character, as written by Charles Moulton and drawn by Harry G. Peter, was just terrific. **WONDER WOMAN** and **Sensation Comics**, to name two, was distinctive, energetic, surprising, weird, easily crafted — and like nothing else you've seen in comics, before or since. Moulton's scripts were as trained as unbreakable steel of Greek myth, pseudo-science, feminism, and sheer fantasy, and Peter's artwork had a ideal-tantronic flavor to it, full of intricate curls, detailed characterizations, and a hard-edged cartoon style that comfortably straddled the gap between the subliminal and the ordinary. The combination was blameless but compelling. And the audience of the time seemed to agree. **WONDER WOMAN** sold its heroines, building a strong enough reputation to survive being with **SUPERTMAN** and **BATMAN** when all the other super-hero characters were dropping like flies.

Today, however, it's a marketplace where super-heroes are doing great, **WONDER WOMAN** was just in *Nature*. What happened? Well, it's a long slide into creative bankruptcy! Did the fundamental weaknesses of the last few decades render the Wonder Woman concept dated? Is the character simply not "Eighties" enough? Well, it's hardly my place to answer. Actually, it's Greg Potter's place, so he's the writer of the all-new **WONDER WOMAN** series that

will be coming your way this summer, after the mini-series finishes up. He's been entrusted with the task of generally placing things up from Square One in 1988.

So why this mini-series? Well, there's some time between the last issue of the "old" **WONDER WOMAN** series and the standard finale to the series in **CRISIS ON EARTH-1** (PART 1) and the first issue of the new. And that gives us the chance to do something a little special, to give the character a send-off that doesn't simply bring the series to a close but harkens back to the salad days of the series, the Moulton and Peter days that so many comic press love and so many modern comic readers are totally unaware of.

Alan Gold, the editor of the mini-series, decided that the best way to achieve that aim was to get Trina Robbins, arguably the premier Peter-influenced artist working in the business today, and certainly one of Wonder Woman's biggest fans, as part of the creative team. And not! Well, maybe Alan figured that if he assigned us the task, it'd go home and work and stop hanging around in Manhattan all the time. (Yes, it didn't work!)

Since Trina is a West Coast person and I'm an East Coast person, the immediate result of this creative team being formed was a series of long-distance phone calls, usually to odd hours. After the first conversation, I figured I was in trouble. If I decided to "think about what could go on in the mini-series and get back together with our ideas and see how they come along." And well, Trina isn't known just for her open, stylish, approachable artwork—she's known for doing stories with a focus on character, personality, emotion, and human-level conflicts. I was pretty sure that she'd come up with all kinds of personality and character stuff to do with the series, and it'd be up to me to supply the action and adventure. Unfortunately, all I'd come up with was some reflections on the personalities of Wonder Woman and Steve Trevor, and the idea that I'd like to play Wonder Woman off against a little girl who was totally unlike her.

So imagine my surprise when, in the next phone call, Trina started telling me about a couple of sets of villains she appeared in 1947 (and who I'd never heard of), and this conflict over energy sources and earth-threatening battle plans that

Wonder Woman could easily get involved in "Great," I said in astonishment, "take me to a little girl who this somewhere?"

"Great," Trina responded, and we were off. She sent me the ropes of the stories for emergency appeared in, and I got to work. Once I got a structure for the issues worked out, Trina and I plotted it apart and pushed it back together again and hashed out all the little stuff that would go along from panel to panel. And I kept being surprised at how the give-and-take of the collaboration worked. Every time Trina suggested something, it would be just when I needed, and when I added stuff, Trina would enthusiastically add it in—it was positively disgusting the way we got along.

It seemed like it was all pointed by someone controlling both of us, sometimes. Once we had the first two issues worked out, we'd set up the whole energy conflict that Wonder Woman was in the middle of, and I was getting more and more interested in what would go on with that, and I had some ideas for some weird special effects stuff, based on some newspaper articles about quantum mechanics. Trina had sent me. But aside from some stuff with Steve Trevor, I really didn't know where to go with Buzo and Wonder Woman and the essential personality stuff that could trigger off all this action. That's when the phone rang.

"Hi, Kurt, it's Trina. Look, I know what's going to come out of all this stuff you've started with Buzo. Now's this!" And she gave me a framework of character development, friendships, love affairs, and other surprises that not only sounded great, but it set up absolutely everything I needed to do the action and special effects stuff I'd been thinking about. I don't know why I worked out this way, with each of us always working on separate aspects of the stories, and our separate contributions just happening to combine smoothly. But it kept happening. And the result was that here we had two people who've wanted to do **WONDER WOMAN** for a long time, being given a chance to do a semi-ol mini-series that would say good-bye to the present incarnation of the character. This was not only out started to do what we'd always wanted to do—it was our last chance. So we had to get everything we wanted to do for the high points, anyway into four issues. It's amazing that we didn't end up at each others' throats.

Instead, we kept getting unexplained dividends—the wisdom of which concerns the way Trina drew Buzo. Trina will be writing the next page next month, so I'll let her tell the story, but suffice it to say that it was something that Trina had wanted to

"I stuffs stuff too much! I've admired his **WONDER WOMAN** 1918 bit—no, he's fine, more, believe me, so I asked him to come into the project.

He does hang around the office a lot, though"—Alan

to prove she was a young girl reading **WONDER WOMAN**—and it was done successfully!

[Before I forget, I want to make sure to mention Karl Wesemann, the old college friend of mine who made a distinct contribution to this series. Every time I had to handle something on the script that was based on real scientific principles, I'd call Karl and pick his brain. Once it'd gotten enough head science out of Karl to work with, I'd borrow it and changed it until it fit the strange attitude toward science that the 1940s and 50s **WONDER WOMAN** had, and that *Astoria* practically demands, so you may not recognize it much. But any scientific information you see in these pages about radiation or nuclear physics probably came from Karl.]

Another question I want to address here is an elephant in the room, at least there! We ran into this problem early on when working on this series. We were supposed to be doing something that had taken back to the Golden Age. On the other hand, we were supposed to do it with the *Wonder Woman* who had just had her series cancelled. And we had to use the current double-W symbol rather than the eagle symbol on *Wonder Woman's* costume. Unfortunately, though **WONDER WOMAN** was published continuously from the 1940s to the 1980s, and there is no break in the series (at least, yes, **FLASH** or **GREEN LANTERN**, which both disappeared in the Golden Age and were revamped and revived in the Silver Age. It's been established that the *Wonder Woman* that H.G. Peter drew and the current *Wonder Woman* were two different people. The Peter version was on Earth-S, along with the original Superman, Batman, Flash, and the like, and the current version was on Earth-1. And the double-W symbol is only a few years old! How were we supposed to do an untold adventure of *Wonder Woman* that had taken back to the Golden Age—when we were writing about a different character whose costume made it clear the story was fairly contemporary?

Well, we found a way. We figured that since a major part of the purpose of the **CRISIS ON INFINITE EARTHS** series was to do away with the alternate Earths and the attendant confusions and hassles they caused (like this one here), it would be foolish of us to consider us tied down by the fact that our story stretched all over established continuity. We wanted a legendary aspect to the series, anyway, so we decided to let the continuity chips fall where they would, take advantage of the fact that the continuity we disturbed had been wiped out by **CRISIS** anyway, and live with the reputation that "it's a legend." This is also known as the "Way Kid You-Better-like school of continuity, but that's not polite, so we don't say it."

In the answer to the question "Which *Wonder Woman* is this?" is that it's *Wonder Woman*, and that's as far as we're going to get it down. If any longtime **WONDER WOMAN** readers out there want to figure out which parts of the story relate to which pieces of continuity and what Earth they "come from," we'd like to

see the results. But please don't say we asked—since we did it all on purpose.

That's not to say we won't have made other mistakes—nobody's immune to that. Any mistakes, or other comments, be they complimentary or critical that you have on the series—write 'em down and send 'em in! Despite the fact that this is a four-issue mini-series, which means that we'll only be able to run letters about the first issue (in #4, and maybe in #3 as well, if we're lucky), doesn't mean you shouldn't write! We've had a good time doing these four issues, but we're not doing them for ourselves. We're doing them for you to enjoy, and we won't know what you liked and what you didn't if you don't write yourself!

And that's about it. Despite the fact that we get to go on at great length here in the back of the book about why we did this series and how we went about it and how much fun we had doing it and so on and so on, it's up to you to like it or not like it. And, at least for #1, you've probably made up your

mind on that score before you got around to reading all this tiny type. We hope you enjoyed it—that's why we did it. But if you didn't, well, you can still take heart! Because it won't be long before the all-time ready for the *Egyptian WONDER WOMAN* series will be coming your way!

NEXT ISSUE: *Wonder Woman*, *Black*, and their mysterious benefactor have crashed in the desert! Did they live? Well, one of them had better have, or this'll be a real short series! Where were they headed? What does *Astoria* want with an assorted selection of innocent bystanders? And what does all this have to do with the mysterious Land of Mizzon? Or the evacuation of Paradise Island? For the answers to these and other questions, I'll bet all of you know what to look for next month!

Plus! Three Riddlers write the last page, which means I don't have to!

—Karl Kesel



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